Leather Routine

Here is a suggested routine to assist you during the day. Please feel free to personalize these suggestions.

History: Leather is one of the earliest and most important materials used by man. Cultures from around the world made leather into clothing, housing, boats and containers. Preserving the hides of animals required a tanning process. The 19th century leatherworker made leather into harnesses for horses and oxen, enabling them to pull large loads in wagons.

The harness and saddle maker was an important part of the community. He constructed and repaired harnesses, horse collars and stage equipment. He also repaired shoes and stitched ripped seams in leather garments. His tools ranged from simple hand held cutters to sophisticated machines. Many farmers like Mr. Bernhard did their own leather repair. Examples of leather saddles, collars, and bridles are in the carriage barn.

Before students arrive
- Make sure needles are threaded.
- After **each** group you will need to thread and knot the needles so they are ready for the next group. Each string should be about 36 inches long. (about the length from the center of chest to fingers)

Arrival of students at leather center
- **Welcome** students and have them sit down. Exchange introductions.
- **Explain** that they will do two different chores at this station.
- **Ask** all students to feel the large piece of leather on the table and the hard strips of leather before starting the activities.
- **Divide** the students into two groups; one group will soap the saddle while the other group makes marble bags.
- At the halfway point, the group will switch. The students making marble bags will go to the saddle soaping station and saddle soap students will make marble bags.

Saddle soap station
- **Show** students the pictures provided.
- **Discuss** why leather was important. What were other uses of leather?
- **Ask** students where leather comes from?
- **Ask** students what tack is? Definition: *tack is gear used for harnessing horses.*
- **Ask** students how a farmer would plow his fields. (They would use horses or oxen, and would need tack.)
- **Ask** students to look closely at the picture of the team of horses. Emphasize how important it was to keep leather in good condition a broken piece could cause a major accident.

- **Explain** to the students that one of their jobs would have been to use saddle soap on the leather to keep it in good condition.
- **Give each** student a cloth with a small amount of saddle soap already on the cloth.   The idea is to rub a very small amount of soap onto the tack for a long time to get the oil to penetrate the leather.

Making the marble bag
- **Explain** that a favorite activity (especially at school) was playing marbles. Children would have a leather or cloth bag filled with marbles.
- Provide pencils for each student. Ask them to write their name directly on their muslin circle.
- **Ask** students to use the dots on the circle as a guide and sew the bag. (Hint) **Encourage** students to do one stitch at a time pulling the string all the way through rather than doing a gathering stitch.
- When students have gone all the way around tell them to **pull** the two ends of the thread to create the bag. **Tie** the two ends together. The ends are meant to be long so that students can wear the bag around their neck.
- Let each child pick two marbles.

Playing Marbles
- When students are finished with both activities they can play marbles. Instructions are in the box or children can make up their own rules.
- The students are allowed to use two shooter marbles. The shooter marbles must be returned when they are done playing.
- When the bell rings line up your students and walk them to the crafts station.
- **Students are not allowed to move on to their next station unless an adult walks them over.**

End of the Day Clean up
- Please arrange all materials neatly on the table.
- Please thread and knot (just one end of the string) all the needles for tomorrow's parents!
- We appreciate your help in keeping our facilities clean.